

# BREAKING THE SILENCE

Bringing Awareness to PARENTS about the COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

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## The Riverdale Community Teams Up to Combat Sex Trafficking in Georgia

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 10, 2011

Riverdale, GA — Riverdale Councilman Kenny Ruffin, concerned citizens, and representatives from several county agencies will educate the public about the dangers of sex trafficking and what they can do to prevent it during "Breaking the Silence," an event to bring awareness to parents about the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The event will take place on **Oct. 22 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Riverdale Centre**, located at 7210 Church St. in Riverdale, within the Riverdale Town Center complex.

Ashley Gatewood, the event's lead organizer, was inspired to educate parents about the existence of sex traffic in the Atlanta area following the premiere of "The Candy Shop," a short film illustrating the lucrative business of child exploitation. Presently, approximately 400 girls are sexually exploited every month in Georgia according to research conducted for the Governor's Office for Children and Families (GOCF).

"At the first event held in April of this year at the Riverdale Centre, our guests were so overwhelmed by what they learned that it encouraged them to take the information they got to their organizations. We hope to promote this same action to parents, hoping they can empower their families" said Gatewood. During "Breaking the Silence," concerned citizens and parents will have the chance to hear from experts and local officials about child exploitation, as well as voice their concerns and ideas, she said.

Supporting the event are representatives from the City of Riverdale, Clayton County Board of Health, Georgia Care Connection, Georgia Bureau of Investigations, Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention, and Office of the Solicitor General Clayton County.

Clayton County District Health Director Dr. Alpha Fowler Bryan, one of the event's supporters said, "One of the key tenants of public health is adolescent health. On a daily basis, we try to ensure that young people have access to tools that help improve their self esteem and information that can protect them from diseases and help them make healthy lifestyle choices.

"Human trafficking is a real concern to our health agency and a lot of human trafficking taking place in Georgia is happening in our backyard due to Atlanta being such an international hub," Bryan added. "The Clayton County Board of Health wants to do whatever it can to assist in bringing more attention to this issue, so that fewer children are subjected to these heinous crimes."

"After hearing about the shocking details on sex trafficking in Atlanta, I immediately decided to sponsor the event, in hopes of bringing awareness to others in Riverdale and the surrounding community," said Councilman Ruffin. "We hope to inspire action and make a positive difference."

"Breaking the Silence" is geared toward educating parents on the issues surrounding child sex trafficking and to suggest ways to keep your child safe from harm. For more information, visit the website at [www.endcsecnow.com](http://www.endcsecnow.com).

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**endCSECnow** is a project born out of the unified passion of four young women, from Atlanta, GA who had been working with youth in various capacities. The project organizers had been researching and learning about a dangerous and heinous crime happening in their own backyard:

children were being bought and sold for sex against their will. Passionate about the mental and spiritual health of youth and how it impacts their growth and development, they immediately thought of how they could help using the resources they had. Together, they came up with the idea to spread the awareness about the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) to their community.

**endCSECnow** is not an official nonprofit organization, nor is it another youth group. It is a call-to-action project of youth advocates who seek to serve the youth issues that do not currently have a voice.

For more information, visit [www.endCSECnow.com](http://www.endCSECnow.com)